United Nations S/PV.7647

# Security Council

Seventy-first year

*Provisional*

**7647**th meeting
Wednesday, 16 March 2016, 11 a.m.
New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Gaspar Martins | (Angola) |
| *Members*: | China | Mr. Zhao Yong |
| | Egypt | Mr. Aboulatta |
| | France | Mr. Delattre |
| | Japan | Mr. Okamura |
| | Malaysia | Mr. Ibrahim |
| | New Zealand | Mr. Taula |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Iliichev |
| | Senegal | Mr. Ciss |
| | Spain | Mr. Gasso Matoses |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Yelchenko |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Wilson |
| | United States of America | Mr. Pressman |
| | Uruguay | Mr. Bermúdez |
| | Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) | Mr. Suárez Moreno |

## Agenda

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to West Africa (3 to 9 March 2016)

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16-07204 (E)

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*The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Security Council mission**

**Briefing by Security Council mission to West Africa (3 to 9 March 2016)**

**The President**: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Council will hear briefings by the three co-leads of the Council's mission to West Africa, namely, Angola, France and Senegal.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Angola.

The Security Council mission to West Africa concluded in Dakar on 8 March 2016. The mission held meetings with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). It was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, who was accompanied by his deputy, Ms. Hiroute Gebre Selassie. The mission also met with the diplomatic corps accredited to Senegal, and ended its visit with a meeting with President Macky Sall, in his capacity as Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Mr. Chambas gave an overview of the situation in the region and on issues related to the work of UNOWAS in preventing and resolving conflicts. He spoke of the activities under the new UNOWAS configuration and mandate. He also told the mission of his recent visit to the Niger, where his Office was closely monitoring the situation with regard to the second round of presidential elections, on 20 March, as Mr. Hama Amadou, the candidate of the opposition, remained in prison on charges of child-trafficking. Lastly, Mr. Chambas briefed us on his visit to Benin, where he welcomed the peaceful conduct of presidential elections, with a second round to be held soon.

The members of the Council stressed the importance of accelerating the implementation of the new UNOWAS configuration and of the setting up of a cell office in Mauritania to work with the group of five countries of the Sahel. The Council also expressed support for the conflict-prevention role UNOWAS was playing in the region and described the Office as a model for United Nations preventive diplomacy.

The Special Representative stressed the increasing threat of terrorism in West Africa, especially by Boko Haram. He requested the international community's support for the countries of the region in countering terrorism. Mr. Chambas also mentioned the joint visit to the Lake Chad region with his counterpart, Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, aimed as strengthening cooperation with the countries of the region in coordinating the Multilateral Joint Task Force against Boko Haram. He also noted the start of joint border controls.

At our meeting with President Sall, he made an assessment of issues affecting the region, including the threat of terrorism. He shared his views on the situation in Mali and on the need to ensure the territorial integrity of the country, suggesting that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali be empowered to perform its mandate in the light of the current violence affecting Mali. The President emphasized the transnational nature of the terrorist threat, which calls for the joint efforts of the international community in support of countering terrorist groups in the region, and noted the need for West African countries to develop capacities to deal with such threats.

Mission members requested President Sall's view on resolving the crises in Guinea-Bissau and Burundi. The President advised the conduct of a constitutional review as a means to resolve the situation in the future, while urging the authorities to work work together until the end of the term of President José Mário Vaz of Guinea-Bissau, who is still in office. The President further emphasized the role of ECOWAS in Guinea-Bissau, the financial difficulties facing the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, and its important role in the maintenance of peace and security in the country.

The President informed the mission of his stay in Burundi on 25 and 26 February as a member of the African Union (AU) high-level delegation that was comprised of the Presidents of Ethiopia, Gabon, Mauritania and South Africa, and requested the President of Burundi to conduct an inclusive dialogue with the Burundian stakeholders, including those who left the country, and to free all political prisoners. President Sall noted the important role played by the

Ugandan President as facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue and in finding ways to reduce tensions with Rwanda. He stressed the importance of the African Union leadership in the negotiations in Burundi, and the AU decision to send 100 military and 100 human rights observers to Burundi due to President Nkurunziza's rejection of the AU proposal to send an African peacekeeping mission to Burundi. President Sall requested the Security Council to support that African Union observer mission to Burundi.

In conclusion, we take this opportunity to thank the Government of Senegal for the warm welcome and hospitality afforded to the Security Council mission to Senegal. Our appreciation goes to Mr. Ibn Chambas and UNOWAS for providing the logistical and protocol arrangements necessary to the success of the mission to Senegal. We also thank the Secretariat, the security teams and all those who were directly or indirectly involved in the organization of the Security Council mission to West African countries, as well as France and Senegal for co-leading that important mission.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of France to make a statement on the Council's visit to Mali.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin by conveying my heartfelt gratitude to the Malian, Senegalese and Guinea-Bissau authorities for their warm welcome, and to the Secretariat, in particular the secretariat of the Council, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for having enabled and so ably organized the Security Council mission from 4 to 7 March. We shall continue to work with the Secretariat to draw all lessons from that important mission. I also sincerely thank Angola and Senegal, with which we formed a tight-knit team to conduct that important visit.

I should like to focus on the visit to Mali, where the Security Council met with a great many stakeholders, including the President and members of the Government, as well as all the armed groups that signed the peace agreement. We were also able to talk with parliamentarians and State and local representatives in Timbuktu, the imams of the Timbuktu mosques and representatives of women's organizations. We also had very useful exchanges with MINUSMA personnel and representatives of Operation Barkhane and the European Union Training Mission in Mali. Two years after the first Security Council visit to Mali, our mission allowed us to send three main messages.

The first message was that there can be no peace without reconciliation among all Malians. All components of Malian society throughout the territory will have to come together and feel included. That was the Council's message when it visited the northern part of the country, including Timbuktu, for the first time. The Security Council meeting with the main imams in that city, which was deeply moving and powerful, clearly demonstrated that Malians yearn for peace.

Our second message was that the efforts towards reconciliation and the implementation of the peace agreement must be accelerated. The Council strongly urged all signatories to the peace agreement to speed up its concrete implementation so as to bring its peace dividends to the people of Mali. We were struck by the fact that all players in Mali — including the Government and the armed groups — spoke out clearly in favour of the peace agreement. We were able to identify all that was at stake in the full implementation of the agreement.

Our third message was that, in the face of the ongoing threat of terrorism, our resolve must be absolute. The Council offered its support to the Malian forces that are at the front line of the fight against terrorism, particularly in central Mali, which has been destabilized by an increase in terrorist attacks since early 2015. That is one reason why the Security Council was determined to visit Mopti. The mission also allowed us to demonstrate the Council's support for the Blue Helmets of MINUSMA, whose courage and resolve in protecting the civilian population are praiseworthy. All stakeholders in Mali, including President Keita, loudly called for MINUSMA to be strengthened so that it can meet the asymmetric challenges it is facing. That was also the message that the President of Senegal clearly conveyed to us.

I have tried to be brief and clear in my assessment of our very busy and useful visit to Mali.

**The President**: I thank the representative of France for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Senegal to make a statement on the Council's visit to Guinea-Bissau.

**Mr. Ciss** (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I convey the regrets of Ambassador Fodé Seck, who participated in

the Security Council mission but is currently on another mission outside the United States and is unable to be with us this morning.

I wish to thank the Secretariat and the national missions to the United Nations of the three countries concerned — Mali, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal — as well as the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau and the security team for their efforts and assistance in ensuring the success of the mission. I also thank all Council members for their significant contributions in all phases of the mission, reserving, of course, a special mention for Angola and France, the organizer countries of the mission, for their excellent collective work.

Turning to the report (S/2016/215), after Mali, the Security Council mission visited Guinea-Bissau on 7 March to assess the political situation in the country. Under the co-lead of Angola and Senegal, the mission held meetings with Prime Minister Carlos Correia, in the presence of some members of his Government, including the Foreign Minister, the President of the National Assembly, Mr. Cipriano Cassamá, leaders of the ruling party, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), and the opposition party, the Social Renewal Party (PRS). The Council also held a meeting with the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. José Mário Vaz. It should be noted that meetings initially planned with the leadership of UNIOGBIS, the diplomatic corps and civil society had to be cancelled due to time constraints.

At the meeting with the members of the Security Council, Prime Minister Carlos Correia discussed the reasons behind the political crisis affecting the proper functioning of the country's institutions and the difficulties the Government's programme encountered in obtaining the parliamentary approval in January 2016.

Essentially the Council had three important messages to issue. The Council reaffirmed the interest it attaches to the situation in Guinea-Bissau and its ongoing commitment to assisting the country in its efforts. The Council stressed the need for an inclusive and constructive dialogue to ease persistent tensions between authorities, but the Council also welcomed the important role played by the Economic Community of West African States Security Mission in Guinea-Bissau, which should be supported in the pursuit of its mission.

The Council met, as stated previously, with the President of the National Assembly, who explained in detail the crisis in the Parliament. Next, the Security Council mission met with the leader of the PAIGC, Mr. Domingos Simões Pereira, who gave a detailed briefing on the crisis within the ruling party that led to the expulsion of 15 of its members who had abstained in the voting on the State budget presented by the Government to the Parliament in December 2015. The mission also met with leaders of the main opposition party, the PRS, who denied any involvement of their party in the current situation. Finally, the mission held its last meeting in Guinea-Bissau with President José Mário Vaz, who called for a political solution to the internal crisis within the PAIGC through a political dialogue with all parties concerned. In the opinion of President Vaz, this political dispute should not be brought before the courts. In addition, he praised the role played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the search for solutions to the crisis and expressed to the Council members his commitment to ensuring respect for the Constitution and the proper functioning of institutions.

The Council stressed to President Vaz the importance of dialogue in resolving the crisis and reminded him of the regional and subregional implications of the political deadlock, the threat of transnational organized crime in Guinea-Bissau, drug trafficking and the fear that terrorists and extremist groups might take advantage of the situation to further destabilize Guinea-Bissau and the region. In addition, the Council called on the President to preserve the dialogue and respect the laws and the Constitution of the country as the only way to resolve the crisis, since politics are also subject to the rule of law.

The mission left Guinea-Bissau with real concerns about deep fracture among political leaders, State institutions and the political parties, while asking interested stakeholders to work to resolve the crisis through dialogue in accordance with the Constitution and laws.

Before concluding, I would also like to thank the Guinea-Bissau authorities for the steps they took to welcome the Security Council mission.

**The President**: I thank the representative of Senegal for his briefing on Guinea-Bissau.

On behalf of the Council, I should like to express appreciation to all of the members of the Security Council and the Secretariat who participated in this mission for the manner in which they discharged their important responsibilities.

*The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.*